Suggestions by Kailash-Mansarovar Pilgrims

2424. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the pilgrims who went on Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra have, on return, urged Government to provide Indian cooks and doctors during their stay in Chinese territory;

(b) what other demands have been put forward before Government; and

(c) the other details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (c) Government receives suggestions from time to time from different quarters for improving facilities for the Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra. Suggestions for improvements on the Chinese side are discussed with the latter and include improvements in medical, transportation, accommodation and cooking facilities.

Action against ULFA by Bhutan

2425. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Bhutan Government has taken action against ULFA in their territory;

(b) whether some camps of ULFA have been shifted from Bhutan; if so, to which places;

(c) whether such type of actions have been taken by Bangladesh Government also; and

(d) what help has been offered by Government to these Governments in dealing with ULFA?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (d)

Bhutan

The presence of ULFA militants on Bhutanese territory has been a subject of discussion with the Government of Bhutan. Both sides share concern on the issue. The Government of Bhutan has reiterated that they

would not allow their territory to be misused against the interests of India.

The King of Bhutan, in his National Day address on December 17, 2001, called the presence of armed militants from Assam on Bhutanese soil as the 'biggest threat' faced by Bhutan. After extensive discussion on the subject, the National Assembly of Bhutan adopted a series of Resolutions in 1999, 2000 and again in 2001—(a) to undertake a dialogue to persuade the militants to leave peacefully; (b) to cut off the supply lines of the militants; (c) take action under the National Security Act against those found to be providing material support to the militants and (d) evict the militants forcefully from Bhutan, in the event of peaceful negotiations failing to achieve their evacuation.

The details of the dialogue which the representatives of Royal Government of Bhutan, had with ULFA in June, 2001, were presented to the 79th Session of the Bhutanese National Assembly held in July, 2001. The Assembly was informed that agreement had been reached on closure of ULFA camps in four places by the end of December, 2001. These four camps have since been closed, though many of the militants from these camps have relocated at other camps within Bhutan. The 80th session of the National Assembly held in July, 2002, reiterated the urgency to evict the militants from Bhutan.

The Governments of India and Bhutan remain in close touch on how best to deal with the issue and are extending co-operation to each other in this regard.

Bangladesh

The Government of India is aware of the reports that agencies inimical to India's interests are misusing the territory of Bangladesh for their anti-India activities. The Government of India has been regularly taking up these security-related issues with Bangladesh at different levels through diplomatic channels and institutional mechanisms existing between the two countries. The subject has been addressed at various levels through bilateral dialogue mechanisms such as the Joint Working Group, Home Secretary level talks, Foreign Secretary level talks and Director-General level talks between BSF and Bangladesh Rifles. The Bangladesh Government has assured that it will not allow undesirable elements to use its territory for activities prejudicial to the security interests of India.